

## Ten Essential Verses of the Bhagavad Gītā

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#### Introduction to the Gītā

**aśocyānanvaśocastvam̄ prajñāvādāṁśca bhāṣase |  
gatāsūnagatāsūmśca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ || 2-11||**

*tvam* – you; *aśocyān* – those who should not be grieved for; *anvaśocah* – grieve; *prajñāvādān* – words of wisdom; *bhāṣase* – you speak; *ca* – and; *paṇḍitāḥ* – the wise; *gatāsūn* – those from whom the breath has left; *agatāsūn* – those from whom the breath has not yet left; *ca* – and; *na anuśocanti* – do not grieve

You grieve for those who should not be grieved for. Yet you speak words of wisdom. The wise do not grieve for those who are living or for those who are no longer living.

#### Nature of the Self (*tvam*)

**vedāvināśinam̄ nityam̄ ya enamajamavyayam |  
katham̄ sa puruṣah pārtha kam̄ ghātayati hanti kam || 2-21||**

*pārtha* – Oh! Son of *Prīthā* (Arjuna); *enam* – this; *avināśinam* – indestrutible; *nityam* – timeless; *ajam* – unborn; *avyayam* – that which does not undergo decline; *yah veda* – the one who knows; *sah* – that; *puruṣah* – person; *katham* – how; *kam* – whom; *hanti* – kills; *kam* – whom; *ghātayati* – causes to destroy

Oh! Son of *Pūrṇā*, the one who knows this (self) to be indestructible, timeless, unborn, and not subject to decline, how and whom does that person kill? Whom does he cause to kill?

**prajahāti yadā kāmānsarvānpārtha manogatān |  
ātmanyevātmanā tuṣṭah sthitaprajñastadocaye || 2-55||**

*pārtha* – Oh! Son of *Prīthā*; *yadā* – when; *sarvān* – all; *manogatān* – as they appear in the mind; *kāmān* – desires; *prajahāti* – gives up; *ātmani* – in oneself; *eva* – alone; *ātmanā* – with oneself; *tuṣṭah* – one who is happy; *tadā* – then; *sthitaprajña* – a person of ascertained knowledge; *ucyate* – is said to be

When a person gives up all the desires as they appear in the mind, Oh! *Pārtha*, happy in oneself, with oneself alone, that person is said to be one of ascertained knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> Translation and meaning from the *Bhagavadgītā Home Study Course*, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, 1999. For a detailed commentary on these verses, please refer to the *Bhagavadgītā Home Study Course* book.

## Nature of *Īśvara* (*tat*)

**mayā tatamidam̄ sarvam̄ jagadavyaktamūrtinā |  
matsthāni sarvabhūtāni na cāham̄ teṣvavasthitāḥ || 9-4||**

*maya* – by me; *avyakta-mūrtinā* – whose form can not be objectified; *idam sarvam jagat* – this entire world; *tatam* – is pervaded; *sarva-bhūtāni* – all beings; *mat-sthāni* – have their being in Me; *na ca aham* – and I am not; *teṣu avasthitāḥ* – based in them

This entire world is pervaded by Me whose form can not be objectified. All beings have their being in Me and I am not based in them.

## The two-fold committed life-styles

**loke'smin dvividhā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayānagha |  
jñānayogena sāṅkhyānāṁ karmayogena yoginām || 3-3||**

*anagha* – Oh! Sinless One; *asmin* – in this; *loke* – world; *dvividhā* – two-fold; *niṣṭhā* – committed life-styles; *purā* – in the beginning; *mayā* – by me; *proktā* – was told; *jñānayogena* – in the form of the pursuit of knowledge; *sāṅkhyānām* – for the renunciates; *karmayogena* – in the form of the pursuit of action; *yoginām* – for those who pursue activity

Oh! Sinless One, the two-fold committed life-style in this world, was told by Me in the beginning – the pursuit of knowledge for the renunciates and the pursuit of action for those who pursue activity.

## *Karma-yoga: Īśvara is the author of the results of action*

**karmaṇyevādhikāraste mā phaleṣu kadācana |  
mā karmaphalaheturbhūrmā te saṅgo'stvakarmanī || 2-47||**

*karmanī* – in action; *eva* – only; *te* – your; *adhikārah* – choice; *phaleṣu* – in the results; *mā kadācana* – never; *karma-phala-hetuḥ* – the cause of the results; *mā bhūḥ* – do not be; *akarmanī* – in inaction; *te* – your; *saṅgah* – attachment; *mā astu* – let it not be

Your choice is in action only, never in the result thereof. Do not be the author of the results of action. Let your attachment not be to inaction.

## *Karma-yoga: Doing one's duty is worshipping the lord*

**yataḥ pravṛttirbhūtānāṁ yena sarvamidam̄ tatam |  
svakarmanā tamabhyarcya siddhim̄ vindati mānavah || 18-46||**

*yataḥ* – from whom; *bhūtānām pravṛttiḥ* – (is) the creation of the beings; *yena* – by whom; *sarvam idam* – all this; *tatam* – is pervaded; *tam* – him; *svakarmanā* – through

one's own duty; *abhyarcya* – worshipping; *mānavah* – the human being; *siddhim* – success; *vindati* – gains

Through one's own duty, worshipping him from whom is the creation of the beings, by whom all this is pervaded, a human being gains success.

### *Sannyāsa-yoga: vividiṣā-sannyāsa*<sup>2</sup>

**sannyāsastu mahābāho duḥkhamāptumayogataḥ |  
yogayukto munirbrahma nacireṇādhigacchati || 5-6||**

*mahābāho* – O Mighty Armed! (Arjuna); *ayogataḥ* – without *karma-yoga*; *sannyāsaḥ* – renunciation of action; *āptum* – to accomplish; *duḥkham* – difficult; *tu* – whereas; *yoga-yuktaḥ* – committed to the life of *karma-yoga*; *munih* – one who is capable of reasoning; *na cireṇa* – not after a long time (quickly); *brahma* – Brahman; *adhigacchati* – gains

Renunciation of action, O Arjuna, is difficult to accomplish without *karma-yoga*. Whereas, one who is capable of reasoning, who is committed to a life *karma-yoga*, gains *Brahman* quickly.

### *Sannyāsa-yoga: jñāna-karma-sannyāsa*<sup>3</sup>

**sarvakarmāṇi manasā sannyasyāste sukham vaśī |  
navadvāre pure dehī naiva kurvanna kārayan || 5-13||**

*vaśī* – one who is self-controlled; *dehī* – the indweller of the physical body; *manasā* – mentally (by knowledge); *sarva-karmāṇi* – all actions; *annyasya* – having renounced; *nava-dvāre pure* – in the nine-gated city (the body); *eva* – indeed; *na kurvan* – not acting; *na kārayan* – not causing (others) to act; *sukham* – happily; *āste* – remains

The indweller of the physical body, the one who is self-controlled, having renounced all actions mentally (by knowledge), remains happily in the nine-gated city (the body) neither performing action, nor causing (others) to act.

**sarvadharmaṇiparityajya māmekam śaraṇam vraja |  
aham tvāṁ sarvapāpebhyo mokṣayisyāmi mā śucaḥ || 18-66||**

*sarva-dharmaṇi* – all *karmas*; *parityajya* – giving up; *mām-ekam* – Me alone; *śaraṇam* – take refuge; *sarva-pāpebhyaḥ* – from all *karmas*; *tvā* – you; *aham mokṣayisyāmi* – I will release; *mā śucaḥ* - do not grieve

Giving up all *karmas*, take refuge in Me alone. I will release you from all *karma*; do not grieve.

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<sup>2</sup> *Sannyāsa* taken by a qualified seeker to know the self.

<sup>3</sup> *Sannyāsa*, renunciation of all action by knowledge (*jñāna*) that the self is not the doer.